

and the open-ended commitment, which is the hallmark of that status quo and that open-ended commitment, and adhering to a bumper sticker slogan of "stay the course" is a recipe for continuing instability and failure.

Success isn't assured in any event, but letting the Iraqis know that we are not there for as long as they want us is key to avoiding a culture of dependency. The bottom line is that our open-ended policy and presence has become a deterrent to the very success that we want to bring about. Although the administration policy is aimed at providing security, it is a major contributor to instability.

The Iraqi leaders themselves have set a 6-month goal for making major progress in assuming their security responsibility. Iraqi Prime Minister al-Maliki said on May 22 that his government could take over security for 16 of Iraq's 18 provinces by the end of this year.

On June 11, the Iraqi National Security Adviser, Mr. Rubaie said:

I believe by the end of this year the number of the multinational forces will be probably less than 100,000 in this country.

That amounts to a reduction of at least 30,000 U.S. forces by the end of this year. Mr. Rubaie repeated that position in an op-ed in yesterday's Washington Post. He, again, is the National Security Adviser to the Prime Minister. Our amendment's call for the beginning of a phased redeployment by the end of this year fits the very goals Iraq's leaders have set for themselves.

Listen to what Mr. Rubaie wrote about the many benefits of Iraq reducing the number of coalition forces. This is benefits to Iraq of our reducing the number of coalition forces in Iraq:

It will remove psychological barriers and the reason that many Iraqis joined the so-called resistance in the first place. The removal of troops will also allow the Iraqi government to engage with some of our neighbors that have to date been at the very least sympathetic to the resistance because of what they call the coalition occupation.

"Moreover," Mr. Rubaie said:

the removal of foreign troops will legitimize Iraq's government in the eyes of its people . . . the drawdown of foreign troops will strengthen our fledgling government to last the full four years it is supposed to.

Mr. Rubaie's words are similar to those of General George Casey, the commander of the U.S. and coalition forces in Iraq, who told Congress last fall:

Increased coalition presence feeds the notion of occupation, contributes to the dependency of Iraqi forces on the coalition, extends the time it will take Iraqi security forces to become self-reliant, and exposes more coalition forces to attack at a time when Iraqi security forces are increasingly available and capable.

That is our commander talking about the disadvantages of having a large number of troops remain in Iraq.

Regardless of one's views on whether it was wise to attack Iraq—and I for one thought it was unwise, and so voted—and regardless of one's views on

whether the war has been well managed—and I have been critical of the administration's management—all of us want to maximize the chances for success in Iraq. To maximize the chances for success in Iraq, the Iraqis must take control of their country. Our approach, our amendment, maximizes the chance for success.

Last year, by a bipartisan vote of 79 to 16, the Senate adopted an amendment stating that:

[C]alendar year 2006 should be a period of significant transition to full Iraqi sovereignty.

The Senate language remained in the bill and was signed into law. Our amendment implements that policy direction. The Iraqis are standing up. U.S. and coalition forces have trained and equipped more than 250,000 Iraq security forces. More than two-thirds of Iraq's Army combat battalions are either in the lead or operating independently, according to the administration's May 2006 report to Congress. It is now time for the United States to set a date for the beginning—the beginning of a standdown.

Last fall, General Casey said that our presence in Iraq "fuels the insurgency" and that "beginning to reduce our presence in Iraq" as conditions warrant would result in "taking away one of the elements that fuels the insurgency." That is our commander speaking. Conditions not only warrant the beginning of a reduction of our presence, conditions are such that only a phased, orderly redeployment beginning by the end of this year will maximize the chances of succeeding in Iraq.

By making clear that a phased redeployment of our forces from Iraq needs to begin this year, we will send a clear message to the Iraqis that our presence is not an open-ended security blanket and that they need to assume responsibility for their own future.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BURR). Who yields time?

The Senator from Virginia.

Mr. WARNER. I see the principal cosponsor, the Senator from Rhode Island, a member of our committee, is waiting to speak. I would just like to inquire the following of my colleague.

I have found in our many years in this body that the most effective means to convey a message, the most effective way for the persons beyond this Chamber to follow proceedings on the floor, is often through a colloquy where we not just read speeches but we begin to exchange interpretations of what is before this body by virtue of your amendment and get the responses.

Might I inquire of my colleague of his willingness to permit the Senator from Virginia, at such time as the Senator from Rhode Island has completed, to get up and propound questions chargeable to my side and responses that you wish to make, to the extent you wish to make them, chargeable to your side? Is that a procedure about which I can be persuasive to my colleague, which I

find to be a very effective way to deal with this?

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, am I responding on the time of the Senator from Virginia?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Yes, you are.

Mr. LEVIN. I am perfectly happy to engage in a colloquy at the instigation of the Senator from Virginia. Indeed, I will probably have some questions which I would want to propound to the Senator from Virginia.

On the other hand, I cannot agree that a colloquy which he instigates would be divided in terms of the time consumption. The usual policy around here is the persons who begin a colloquy have that colloquy charged to their time. I have more speakers than I have the time to allocate. It would be unfair to them for me to say that the time consumed in my answering the questions of the Senator from Virginia would come off the time for their remarks.

I am not only happy to engage in a colloquy, I look forward to it, but I would want to follow the usual procedure, which is that those persons who wish to ask questions of somebody have that colloquy taken from their time rather than from the time of the person of whom they are asking the questions.

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I would have to respectfully disagree with what is usual. Time and time again, Senators get up and allocate between themselves the question and answer. I have to take it we are confined primarily, I imagine, to the reading of speeches by individuals and limiting the ability to have a colloquy.

Mr. LEVIN. If the Senator will allow a comment on that, we are not confined to that at all. I expect, when I ask questions of the Senator from Virginia or others who oppose this amendment, that their answers would come from my time and not from their time. I would apply the same rule to me as I suggest would be applied to the questions of the Senator.

Mr. WARNER. The Senator has made clear his statement. I yield the floor as a courtesy to the Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I yield 15 minutes to the Senator from Rhode Island.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island is recognized for 15 minutes.

Mr. REED. Mr. President, I join with my colleague, Senator LEVIN, and Senators FEINSTEIN and SALAZAR, to offer this amendment. Too often, the Bush administration deals simply in slogans. We have heard them so often, so many times: mission accomplished; stay the course; don't cut and run; we will stand down when they stand up; complete victory. But a military operation such as this requires much more than slogans. It requires sufficient personnel and adequate equipment. It requires coherent strategic policy, and it requires detailed plans.